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A DECLARATION

AS TO SOME CONTROVERTED POINTS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME Miniſters and Gentlemen, being ſenſible of the great oppoſition, which has been made of late, to the Chriſtian religion, agreed, to uſe their utmoſt endeavours, to ſupport the ancient and true proteſtant doctrines: and as there are ſome points, which are not controverted at preſent, they judged it proper to give a very brief ſummary of thoſe doctrinal truths, which are now attack'd with the greateſt vehemence, and which they had a ſpecial regard to, in the following articles.

A

DECLARATION, &c.

I.

THE light of nature affords men ſo much knowledge, as to the being and perfections of God, that they are without excuſe, when they glorify him not as God; but it is not ſufficient, to give a ſaving knowledge of the Moſt High; therefore God was pleas'd, to give a clear and full manifeſtation of his mind and will, in the ſcriptures of the old and new teſtament: which are the only and the perfect rule of faith and practice: and no doctrines are to be regarded, which are not there expreſs'd, or deduced

from thence, by neceſſary conſe-quence. In the ſcriptures nothing is reveal'd, contrary to right reaſon; but many myſteries are there reveal-ed, which tranſcend finite reaſon; and they are to be received on the authority of the revealer, without enquiring into the mode of them.

II.

The light of nature informs us, that there is but one God, and that he is cloathed with all poſſible per-fections, and that beſides the one God, there can be no other. This doctrine of the unity of God is a-bundantly confirm'd, in the ſcrip-ture; but there it is reveal'd, that in the unity of the Godhead, there are three perſons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are the

ſame in nature, and all divine perfections; ſo that theſe three, are the one ſupreme God, the one object of our faith and worſhip.

III.

God, from eternity, unchangeably ordain'd whatſoever comes to paſs, yet ſo, as that he is not the author of ſin, nor is violence offer'd to the will of the creature: tho' he unchangeably knows, whatſoever will come to paſs, yet he has not decreed any thing, becauſe he foreſaw it would come to paſs, on certain conditions. By his decree ſome of mankind are predeſtinated to everlaſting life? theſe, God, according to the good pleaſure of his will, has choſe in Chriſt, out of his meer ſovereignty, without any foreſight of

faith or good works, as cauſes or conditions moving him thereto. Such whom he choſe in Chriſt, he choſe that they might, in time, be holy and blameleſs before him; the reſt of mankind he, in his ſovereign pleaſure, has left to feel the conſequences of their tranſgreſſions.

IV.

God created our firſt parents in honour and innocence, and entered into a covenant of works with Adam, and all his poſterity; but he broke this covenant, by ſinning againſt God. By this apoſtacy, he, and we in him, fell from original righteouſneſs, loſt communion with God, and ſo became dead in ſin. The guilt of Adam's firſt ſin is imputed to his poſterity, and a corrupt nature is derived

derived to them, whereby they are averſe to all good, and prone to all evil.

V.

God the Father was pleaſed, before the foundation of the world, to enter into a covenant with Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, and with all the elect, in him, as his ſpiritual ſeed: in which agreement, Chriſt undertook, to do the work of a ſurety, in fulfilling the law, and ſuffering death, that he might bring his ſons and daughters to glory. In this covenant, the moſt ample proviſion is made for the choſen people; ſo that all the bleſſings, pertaining to ſalvation, are beſtowed freely, and do not depend on any conditions, to be performed by the creature. In this

this God the Father ſhew'd the greatneſs of his wiſdom, in contriving a way, wherein, ſecuring the rights of his juſtice, by puniſhing ſin, in the perſon of the ſurety, he might yet ſhew forth the riches of his grace, in ſaving ſinners.

VI.

When the fulneſs of time was come, God the Son, the ſurety for his people, and the mediator between God and them, took upon him the human nature, conſiſting of a true body, and a reaſonable ſoul, not a ſuperangelick ſpirit; which human nature he took into union with his divine perſon; ſo that Chriſt is truly God, and truly man, in one perſon: he being made of a woman, was made under the law, and perfectly

fectly fulfilled it, by obeying its precepts, and ſuffering the puniſhment due to us: he endured grievous torments in his ſoul, as well as pain in his body, and offering himſelf up, in his human nature, which had an infinite value put upon it, ariſing from the union of that nature with his divine perſon, he yielded to the juſtice of God, a full and proper ſatisfaction for the ſins of his people: by which he delivers from condemnation, and gives a right to all ſpiritual bleſſings, and to the glory of heaven: the ſaving benefits of his death are extended no farther, than to the elect, for whom he undertook, and in whoſe place he died: for as all are ſaved, for whom Chriſt died, otherwiſe he muſt be ſuppoſed to have died in vain; and as all men are not actually ſaved,

ved, it follows, that he did not die for all men, or merely to put into a ſalvable ſtate, all who will attempt to work out their own ſalvation, by improving upon the common helps which are afforded them.

VII.

All that are ſaved, are juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, imputed to them. God pardons their ſins, and accepts them as righteous, not on the account of any thing in them, or done by them, but for Chriſt's ſake alone; not by imputing faith it ſelf, the act of believing, or ſincere obedience, as their righteouſneſs; but by imputing Chriſt's active and paſſive obedience, as their ſole juſtifying righteouſneſs. Though they receive Chriſt, and reſt on him,

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and his merits, by faith; yet that faith is not from themſelves, but is the holy Spirit's work; and tho' by that we receive the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, yet it is not the condition, for the ſake of which ſinners are juſtified.

VIII.

By the fall men have loſt all ability of will, for what is good, and cannot, by their own ſtrength, convert themſelves, or prepare themſelves for converſion; when they are effectually called, it is by the irreſiſtible power and efficacy of the holy Spirit, in which they are altogether paſſive, and are quicken'd and enabled by him, to anſwer the call, to repent of their ſins, to abound in good works, and to make a progreſs

greſs in holineſs; which, tho' it is not the cauſe, or condition of ſalvation, yet it is a neceſſary part of it, and muſt be found, in all who hope to ſee the Lord with comfort.

IX.

They who are ſanctified, though they frequently ſin, and ſo provoke God, as an offended Father, to chaſtiſe them, yet being kept by the power of the holy Spirit, they will be recovered from their backſlidings, and ſhall neither totally, nor finally fall from grace, but ſhall certainly perſevere to the end.

X. After

X.

After death, the ſouls of believers ſhall be perfectly holy, and ſhall immediately paſs into glory, and ſhall not ſleep with their bodies, which are to be committed to the grave, till the laſt day: at which time, the ſame numerical bodies ſhall be rais'd from the duſt of death in glory and honour, and ſhall be reunited to their ſouls, that in ſoul and body the ſaints may be for ever preſent with the Lord, and may keep up uninterrupted fellowſhip, with the Father, Son and holy Spirit, in the happy regions of reſt and peace.

To the Father, to the Son, and to the holy Spirit, three divine Perſons, and the one ſupreme God, be all honour and glory aſcrib'd, now, henceforth, and for evermore, Amen.



FINIS.